

This is such an interesting parable. It is a story that continues to be told in different ways across time where the rich man who has everything in life has nothing in death and the man who had nothing in life receives everything in death.

In this parable we have this a man who is rich and outside of his house is a poor, hungry and sick man who Jesus gives a name, Lazarus. The hungry and poor person outside of a rich home was a tradition of the times. Archeologists found evidence of it in Pompeii where outside of a large house there was a bench. The bench was supposed to be for the poor and the hungry and the people who were rich with plenty of food would share with the person who is hungry on the bench. Which in the parable, it would seem like this except that the man doesn't exactly do this, he may let scraps go, but it seems as if the dogs get the scraps and eat them and Lazarus who is waiting outside for food.

Then Jesus shares the part where they are both in the afterlife. Lazarus is held by Abraham while the rich man is held by Hades. The rich man sees Lazarus and asks if he could but just give him a little water to drink and Abraham tells him he had a much in his life and now he has nothing in the afterlife while Lazarus had nothing in life has everything in his afterlife. Then knowing that his brothers are doing the same, the rich man asks Abraham to send Lazarus to them to let them know what is coming for them if they continue in their lavish life.

This parable really does not sound good for those who have plenty, anyone who have a surplus. Does this mean that if they do not share with those who are poor or hungry, that

they will go to hell? At the end of the parable Jesus says even if someone came back from the dead and told them that they should do differently they would not believe because they did not already believe in Moses or the prophets. Was Jesus talking about Lazarus or about himself?

Evan and I were discussing this text and I asked him what the good news in this Gospel reading. It seems again like a lot of Law. Even spent a lot of time with the parable in his parable's class and he shared one interpretation that stuck with me. In the parable we are told that there is a great chasm between the rich man and Lazarus. That is can never been crossed. Jesus crosses it for us. He dies and descends to the dead, he defeats death and gets rid of the chasm. We who are sinners can cross that great chasm into Christ arms. Now even with the freedom we are given through Christ, we cannot ignore what Christ's message was. We cannot ignore Lazarus. Jesus calls us to NOT be like the rich man who ignored Lazarus.

So, there is this skit that we do at camp a lot. I feel that it portrays what we should do as Christians, not as the rich man. We like to call it the ball skit. What we would do is one person would be playing with this pretend ball tossing it up in the air and all of the sudden someone would come by and say oh what do you have there and the person with the ball would hide it behind their back because they wanted to keep it all to themselves then after the person left they bring the ball back out to be just a little smaller and this would keep happening until it got to the size of a pea and the person would realize that maybe if they shared the ball something might change. So, they call a friend over and start tossing it to

them and with each toss and each friend that joins the ball grows larger. To the point where we would even throw it to the audience and it would cover everyone.

We would always make the ball fit into whatever story we were talking about and so if we were sharing the rich man and Lazarus I would say the ball is like food. That if we share the food we can grow together. Typically we would say it's love and it grows as we share it with others. That God's love is infinite and grows within each of us.

Jesus is asking the people to share with each other when you have an abundance help those who are in a scarcity. Share the ball and together we can grow.

We have no reason to hoard here on earth, because we will gain everything in heaven. So share in your riches, donate to our food drive. Help someone who is struggling. Know that Christ is filling that chasm between us and salvation. So we can go out and share that with the world.

Let us pray:

Bountiful God,

We pray for those who have much, we pray for those who have little, we pray that the chasm between the fed and hungry, the rich and poor shrinks and that Christ's love pulls us all together in your holy name we pray. Amen.